

Naṭāṅkuśa : A Critique on Dramaturgy

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Introduction

Naṭāṅkuśa is a critique of Kūṭiyāṭṭam, denouncing its most characteristic features and pleading for a radical reform. It is perhaps the only work of its kind in Sanskrit known to us. The date and authorship are matters of dispute, but the consensus seems to be that it was written by a Kerala Brahmin scholar not later than the 15th century. In seven chapters the author gives a very detailed but unsympathetic account of the way in which Kūṭiyāṭṭam presents Sanskrit drama on the Kerala stage. There is no doubt that the author is quite knowledgeable about all aspects of the Kūṭiyāṭṭam performance, but he raises very serious objections to the elaborate ritualistic kriya resorted to by the actors, highlights the incongruities in the performance (with special reference to the role of Hanuman in Anguliyankam of Ascharyachudamani), objects to the use of Malayalam or the regional language in Mantrankam as well as to the excessive freedom taken by the jester or Vidushaka, questions the validity of the non-presentation of certain characters on the stage and concludes with the praise of natya in general along with an admonition to the Kūṭiyāṭṭam actors. The author would like Kūṭiyāṭṭam to keep close to the precepts enshrined by Bharata in Nāṭyaśāstra, leave out all irrelevances, avoid all elaboration, drop the use of regional language, and present all the characters on the stage. The work is a vehement condemnation of most of the present-day practices in Kūṭiyāṭṭam, but the description he gives of these is more or less accurate and authentic. Hence the chief value of the work seems to be that it gives a fairly reliable account of how Kūṭiyāṭṭam was actually performed in the 14th or 15th century.

If the suggestions of Naṭāṅkuśa are accepted, then Kūṭiyāṭṭam as we understand it today will no longer be Kūṭiyāṭṭam—Ed.

Translator's Note

Naṭāṅkuśa (c. 15th century) is a text of theatre criticism, perhaps the only one of its kind in the whole of Sanskrit literature. The author is believed to be a Brahmin scholar belonging to the renowned Payyur family in North Kerala. His criticism is directed against some of the stage practices followed by the Cākyārs in presenting Kūṭiyāṭṭam.

The author has chosen two representative pieces popular on the Kerala stage, Anguliyankam (The Act of the Ring)—the sixth Act of Ascharyacūdāmani—and Mantrankam (The Act of Mantra) the third act of Prathinjāyugandharāyam. The discussion centres mainly around these two plays.

The first part is a virulent attack on the ritual dance or Kriyāṅṛta performed by Hanuman in the former play. Bharata prescribed purificatory rites. But they are in the Pūrvaraṅga. The Sūtradhāra does it. The point of disagreement is that here the kriya is performed by an actor character, that too in the course of the presentation of the story. Another point of dispute is the theoretical basis for the transformation of roles or Pakarnāṭṭam practised by the actors. The author recognizes two types of characters—the imitated and the reflected—and distinguishes between the modes of presentation of the one from those of the other. Coming to the other play, where prominence is given to vācika, the Kūṭiyāṭṭam type of Vidūṣaka comes in for sharp criticism. His use of local language, narration of unconnected incidents under the guise of Nirvāḥaṇa: all these are not in conformity with theatrical propriety.

The author claims to be a good friend of the actors. The licentious actions of the actors have defiled the sacred natya. He aims at regaining its pristine purity.

It seems that the conflict is between two traditions—Bharataparamparā and Ācharyaparamparā. The former professed by the critic, traces its origin to Sage Bharata. The actors on the other hand base their performance on the authority of the latter, i.e. the instructions of their preceptors. The author insists that the actors follow the classical tradition since it is anterior and authoritative.

The arrangement of the contents under chapters with titles and subtitles was done while it was first (1993) published in the Ravivarma Granthavali series of the Government Sanskrit College, Tripunithura. The manuscript does not contain any title or subtitle.

The text is designed in the traditional interlocutory style—one raising a doubt and the other giving the answer. The actor is the disputant here. His views, as presumed by the author, are given as purvapakṣa. To differentiate them from the author's own views we have marked them with the Roman letters, A, B, C, etc. Where a paragraph begins without such a letters, it may be understood as presenting the author's own view.

I: CRITICISM OF KRIYĀNṚTTA

Benediction

1

The one greatness reigns supreme, whose power is sung aloud by three Vedas in an uninterrupted tradition.

2

We meditate on that performance of Śiva and Pārvati the cause of the universe from which evolved the marvellous base for the dance in its two-fold aspects or *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava*.

3

The art of Nāṭya ever graced by Goddess Saraswati, her moon-like face, beaming with a light playful benign smile, gives boundless joy to the connoisseurs of art just as the beams of the moon give delight to the Cakora bird.

4

We bow to Sage Bharata and his sons whose art it is that entertains the god of gods in heaven.

5

Wonderful indeed! Rasa which is difficult for others to understand and based on plot and character is taken up and displayed by the great actors.

6

Now this Nāṭya elaborately shown by the local actors is indeed above criticism, because of its transcendental nature!

7

These actors brag thus: "In this field we alone are the authority. These unsophisticated folk do not understand our performance."

8

Agreed; but even in the Aṅgulīyāṅkama, which is extremely popular among the actors like a household song, we have some doubts in the beginning itself.

1. KRIYĀ - NOT PART OF STORY

What is this 'Kriyā'?

1. Is it a part of the story,
2. A means of pleasing the gods,
3. A movement indicating the natural behaviour of the character,
4. A piece of dance forming part of the performance.

And there is no possibility of its being anything other than these. Well. Which view is to be accepted?

Surely, not the first—i.e. 'Kriyā' is not part of the story, because of the absence of any connection with the story in the Kriyā.

The story being witnessed in the performance by the audience does not even touch the "Kriyā" just as the word does not touch a defeated disputant.

As the 'Kriyā' is seen amidst the action of the plot, some people find a thematic content in it. This view cannot be accepted since our experience is that the 'Kriyā' is self-contained and is complete without the enactment of the plot.

2. NOT A MEANS TO PLEASE THE GODS

Another contention is that the 'Kriyā' is performed as a means to please the gods. This also does not seem correct. [Kālidāsa has shown how] the whole process of nāṭya is an invocation' -

Sages look upon it as a lovely visual sacrifice to gods.
It was divided into two by Rudra in his own body which
was shared by Uma. Herein are seen the action of the
people inspired by the three qualities and varied in
sentiments. Indeed Nāṭya is the one common means of
entertaining people however widely their tastes may be different.

As the play itself aims at divine satisfaction there is no need for a separate performance to achieve the same end.

A. 'Kriyā' is an invocation of a special nature.

Then 'Kriyā' alone will suffice to please the gods; leave out the story.

To attain an object one always opts for the easiest method.

To travel fast one prefers a horse to a palanquin.

B. Nāṭya also is necessary

Then what is the nature of the mutuality? Do they (Nāṭya and 'Kriyā') achieve the object severally or jointly?

We cannot say that the enactment of the story precedes the Kriyā as in 'Snātvā Bhuñkte' where in the precedence of the act of bathing is indicated by the suffix 'ktvā'. There the second activity (eating) commences after the termination of the first, i.e. bathing. But here 'Kriyā' starts in the middle of the enactment, of the story, prior to its completion. This intervention would have been well appreciated had it been necessitated

by any exigency unforeseen at the time of the commencement of the play. It is not so since this is the usual practice followed in all the performances. Deviation from the pre-determined course by introducing an alien element unconnected to the context is sheer madness.

C. '*Kriyā*' and *Nāṭya* are reciprocal. Both are mutually complementary. Agreed. Which is the principal agent? Contextually it is *Nāṭya*, the imitation of situations. It is the principal. *Kriyā* then supplements *Nāṭya*, as a subsidiary component it helps the principal agent by removing the obstacles. *Kriyā* thus has its place at the beginning. The rites for the removal of impediments are always performed at the beginning. See for example the description [in *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa*] of Hanuman who before crossing the ocean pays his homage²—

Joining his palms by way of salutation to the sungod,
the mighty Indra, the windgod, Brahma (the self-born)
and the gaṇa (the attendants of Lord Śiva) Hanuman
made up his mind to depart.

See also the initial invocations in several sastric texts where in tributes are paid to the abode of eternal bliss and knowledge. It is observed in the beginning of *nāṭya* since it is the cause for removing all the impediments.

The recital of verses of obeisance to gods in the
beginning is considered to be auspicious; the
wise call it *Nāṇḍī*.³

The stage direction that *Sūtradhāra* enters at the end of the *nāṇḍī* corroborates this universal practice. The conclusion is that *Kriyā*, if intended to be an invocation, should be performed like the *nāṇḍī* at the beginning of the play. *Kriyā* then becomes a repetition of *nāṇḍī*.

D. '*Kriyā*' is another name for *nāṇḍī*.

No quarrel over a name. What is insisted upon is that its place, by all means, should be in the prelude. The practice here is contrary. The action is initiated with the remark—'*Enters Hanuman with the ring in his hand*'. The play begins. When it has progressed further the actor suddenly turns out to introduce a dance—*Kriyānṛtta*. This intervention has to be condemned.

Who does please the gods by this dance—the actor or the character?

It cannot be the actor who by transforming himself in to Hanuman has surrendered his identity. It does not suit the commonsense to believe that Hanuman dances to please gods. It is proper for Hanuman to pay obeisance to the deities for enabling him to reach Lanka crossing the ocean. But he would necessarily do it prior to the narration of his adventures in Lanka.

In *Aṅgulīyāṇkam* '*Kriyā*' is seen performed first after these words of Hanuman—'*Sampratihi*'. It is repeated prior to the performance of the verse—*eṣām pallava*, which is a description of the garden of Lanka. The actor shifts to dance after reciting the first word

'eṣām'. 'Kriyā' is seen for the third time in the context of Pampāpancaka. If the 'Kriyā' is an obligatory rite to please the gods it will have no relevance in the course of the description of a garden. Further, there is no entry of a new character nor the change of an act necessitating the introduction of Kriyā.

E. Kriyā, here, is an expression of wonder. On seeing the exquisite beauty of the garden Hanuman is overwhelmed with joy. He translates it to 'Kriyāṇṛtta'.

Then a better chance for 'Kriyā' would have been the context where Hanuman exclaims— 'Aho! Rākṣasanagarasya Parā Lakṣmīh'!

The wonder, here, knows no bounds. 'Kriyā' is conspicuously absent here.

F. Pampāpancakam is the verse of the preceptor. The 'Kriyā' there indicates the change of the text of the dramatist.

Good. How can the 'Kriyā' in 'eṣām pallava' be explained. They are the words of the dramatist. What is the reason for the omission of 'Kriyā' in 'Dayitam upanayantam', which also are the words of the dramatist.

G. 'Kriyā' is shown to indicate the change of authorship distinction between the texts of dramatist and of the preceptor.

Then there is no justification in omitting the Kriyā in the context of the verse 'atra devīm', which marks the beginning of the text of the dramatist.

H. No. 'Kriyā' is performed only to initiate the words of the preceptor. This is to express his greatness.

Alas! the dramatist is not great!

For whom is not Śaktibhadra great

Whose Cūḍāmaṇi is the real Crest-jewel for the learned!

The preceptor himself is not justified in incorporating this intermediary piece to the body of the play which, no doubt, slackens the rigidity of the structure of the play.

It dries up the flow of nectar-blissful enjoyment of the spectator. Anandavardhana has said⁴.

The unwarranted stoppage of the delineation of *rasa*

and elaboration of it at the wrong place are

impediments to the *rasa*-realisation.

3. NOT THE BEHAVIOUR OF IMITATED CHARACTER

The third view is that these bodily movements are the natural behaviour of the imitated character.

This cannot be accepted; had it been so it would have been consistently uniform from the entry to the exit. The movements, as also his costumes, would form his characteristic feature. Its adoption only on particular occasions is not in good taste.

A. Here it is done with a definite purpose.

What purpose? Why does it not emanate from the teacher's mouth?

B. The absence of the theme is the peculiar purpose.

Physical exercise devoid of corresponding thematic development is not relishable.

The movements in 'Kriyā' should be followed through out the play if it is the normal behaviour of the character. The inevitable conclusion, otherwise, will be that the actor while impersonating the original character is imitating some one else.

4. NOT A PART OF THE PERFORMANCE

The fourth possibility is that 'Kriyā' is correlated, as an accessory, to the performance of nāṭya.

The Kriyānṛtta can be instrumental for the perfection of the performance either by the assistance it renders to the formal emergence of nāṭya (*svarūpaniṣpatti*) or by the part it plays for the attainment of its ultimate goal (*arthakriyā*), viz—the enjoyment of the spectator.

The former is two fold—co-existing and existing separately. The emergence of jar out of clay is an example of the co-existing type. The revolution of the wheel and the emergence of the jar are simultaneous and hence the cause (revolving) and form (jar) co-exist. 'Kriyā' is not like this. Kriyā has ceased to exist when the plot unfolds itself.

The other possibility of separate existence is not applicable here. As seen earlier, when separated 'Kriyā' will have no independent entity, it will be submerged in Nāṇḍī.

Arthakriyā —The ultimate aim of a performance is the spectator's realisation of *rasa*. The 'Kriyā' ceased long before and is unable to and anything of its own to the enjoyment

The bucket when tied to a rope fetches water upwards from the pond;

Unconnected to the rope the bucket is inoperative.

Similarly the 'Kriyā' unconnected to the story can contribute nothing to the enjoyment of the spectator.

A. The dance, being exquisitely enchanting, itself is an ornament to the enactment of the story.

No. 'Kriyā' and Nāṭya are distanced by time.

The pearl-necklace, lost subsequently, fails to adorn the breasts of a lady.

B. The uttered sound, though vanished, transfers its mental impression to the sound that follows and denotes the meaning.

The analogy is not useful here. The 'Kriyā' is incapable of carrying forward its efficacy in appreciating the story that follows. Kriyā does not even serve as an indicator to inform the audience as to what follows next. Nor does it help the actor to gain any skill to express his histrionic talents as he gets through constant practice.

C. 'Kriyā', like the drawings in void, is of hidden consequences.

No. the effect is visible in the physical exertion and resultant fatigue of the actor.

Any piece to be incorporated to the performance should either have proven visible effects or scriptural sanctity.

The music and melody of rhymes like 'sakalasurāsūrā' give the impression that 'Kriyā' is an invocation. On the contrary the physical movements (associated with Hanuman) give

it a monkey-character. Obeisance and monkeyness do not go together.

D. The 'Kriyā' is an intermixture of both the characteristics of the imitated monkey and the invocation to the deities. Hence at times it has rhyme and rhythm, occasionally embodies imitative movements; at the end salutes Lord Śiva and the deities of the eight quarters. The action is of the imitated, hence that character is maintained.

Alas! Ramayana sung to deaf ears!

It has been proved that the dance does, in one way, supplement the enactment of the story. The claim for its being the characteristic behaviour of the imitated is contradicted by the confinement of 'Kriyā' to particular occasions. The uncertainty related to the agent (actor/character) refutes the argument in favour of invocation.

If one is indifferent to water, conch and firewood in their individual state, his reaction to them even when they are combined will not be different. Likewise the adjoinment of Kriyā to Nāṭya fails to evoke any favourable response in the spectator.

5. SUMMARY

To sum up:

The Kriyāṅgita, if intended to be an invocation to the deities, should be performed in the Pūrvarāga itself, to the enjoyment of all, embellished with the attractive accessories of Karaṇa and Aṅgahāra.

The 'Kriyā', as it is inserted amidst the story beyond the periphery of Pūrvarāga, cannot claim the status of an auspicious obeisance to the gods.

NOTES

1. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I.4. Translation G.C. Jhala.
2. *Valmiki Ramayana* Sundarakanda. I.8.
3. This verse attributed to Kohala is quoted by Pūrṇasaraswatī.
4. *Dhvanyaloka*. III-19.
5. The beginning of the verses sung in salutation to Rama which is performed as a part of the Kriyā.

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II - KRIYĀNṚTTA

1. KRIYĀ IS NOT PREPARATORY SCENE

A. 'Kriyā' is Pūrvarāṅga. Hence it begins with the auspicious cāri praying for the benevolence of Goddess Parvati and ends with 'Parivartana' [wherein tributes are paid to the guardians of all quarters.]

Pūrvarāṅga precedes even the Prologue. Dhanañjaya has reiterated this [in his *Dasarūpaka*.¹]

'The stage manager retires after performing the rites of Pūrvarāṅga. Then enters another, similar to him, and introduces the play to the audience.'

'Kriyā' on the other hand is performed during the course of the action of the play.

The 'Kriyā' introduced after the prologue intruding into the enactment of the plot can rightly be called Madhyarāṅga and not Pūrvarāṅga.

Even if it is accepted, for argument's sake, that

'Kriyā' is Pūrvarāṅga, it cannot be ascertained

that the cāri forms the initial act of it.

The play begins after the termination of Nāṇḍī.

Where can this obeisance (*parivartana*), which

now stands as appendage to 'Kriyā', be accommodated?

Moreover Pūrvarāṅga, performed only once at the preliminary stage presides, conferring benediction, over the multitude of actions that follow. But 'Kriyā' is seen repeated on several occasions.

2. NOT INCLUDED AMONG THE PROPERTIES OF NĀṬYA

A. *Costume, language etc., specifically allotted to each character, are, as they enhance the beauty, accessories to nāṭyā. 'Kriyā' also can be counted as one among them.*

Agreed. What kind of an accessory is 'Kriyā'? Can it be included among the recognised limbs of nāṭya? No. 'Kriyā' does not come under the rasas as it is not manifested through vibhāva, anubhāva etc. The status of mental conditions cannot be attributed to 'Kriyā', since bhāva is always associated with the development of the plot. There are four kinds of gesticulations which imitate particular situations. Kriyā is not one among them.

Nāṭyadharmi and lokadharmi do not embrace Kriyā as it is bereft of the devices like the non-hearing of the words uttered in proximity as in *ākāśabhāṣita*. The four *vṛttis* deeply rooted in the play will not accommodate it. Nor is it a *Pravṛtti*. There is no change of dress or tongue in accordance with the location. The two *siddhis* are related to the spectators. Inclusion among the musical instruments is beyond discussion.

3. NOT A SUBSIDIARY LIMB

As the 'Kriyā' does not find a place among the recognised limbs of nāṭya, the only way out is to accept it as a new supplement. But before assigning this role its utility has to be tested. Nothing that lacks a definite advantage can be added to nāṭya.

The 'Kriyā' does not serve any purpose. A detailed examination of the process of

events in the 'Kriyā' is not of much use to us.

The first part of the 'Kriyā' is a rhythmic dance called cāri. It is followed by hāsyacāri, movements to different corners and to the sides. Then a song, *Sakalasurāsura*; yāsi etc. This process and the sequence, the actors keep to their bosom to boast of. The criterion for the acceptance of one over the other is liable to be challenged, but the attempt is futile since the question of the validity of Kriyā itself remains to be settled.

A. *Why search for reasons when all the facts are before your very eyes. When you know the effect why brood over the cause? When you know the effect not futile is your search for cause. Lest one should ponder over the cause of heat in fire. As heat to fire, Kriyā is the attribute of Nāṭya.*

The argument is not sound. Heat is the permanent characteristic property of fire. 'Kriyā' is not like that. It is only occasional. For an occasional attribute, the cause has to be ascertained.

B. *The heat of fire also is occasional. Heat can be separated from fire by the power of magic spells of suppression.*

The effect of the spell is temporary. By this, coolness does not become the attribute of fire. It is only a changed form. The reason for the change is the employment of magic spell. Fire retains its original characteristic. Heat is its attribute.

C. *'Kriyā' is the permanent attribute of nāṭya. At times it is concealed, as the heat of fire is by magic spell, by the enactment of story.*

Nāṭya then becomes 'Kriyā'. It loses its property of being a combination of the four-fold gesticulation. Ultimately this results in its loss of identity. Hence 'Kriyā' can be accepted only as a changed form and not the permanent attribute of nāṭya. A change, as shown above, has to be substantiated by valid reasons. The argument that it is futile to search for cause when effect is known to us is not correct. If it is accepted the very concept of cause-effect relation will have to be abandoned.

The act begins with the words 'samprati hi' followed by the verse 'mainākam nāgakanyā.'² The 'Kriyā' is seen inserted between these two. Now what is the source of it. Certainly not the text of the dramatist. The text does not contain any instruction to the effect that the 'Kriyā' should be performed after reciting 'samprati hi' and prior to the commencement of 'mainākam'.

D. *The words "samprati hi" denote the Kriyā.*

The word has no such connotation. It is not the primary meaning. The secondary function of meaning is not applicable as there is no obstruction to the primary meaning. Also no instruction to this effect is available in *Nāṭyasāstra*.

E. *The authority for the observance of 'Kriyā' may be available somewhere in Nāṭyasāstra or in any other treatise on dramaturgy.*

Tell us where it is. We will believe only after physical verification. One who desires to prove the proposition by fallacious causes 'propositionate' the cause leaving the proposition out. In vain does he try to prove the presence of fire caused by the mist in the

mountain. 'Kriyā' is very much important to nāṭya. But no authority prescribes it! The source, one has to guess. The omniscient preceptor is yet to know where it emanates from!

4. PRACTICE NOT VALID

A. *'Kriyā' has to be recognised as it is observed customarily for a long time.*

Mere observance does not bring respect to anything. It should either have scriptural sanctity or a rationale drawn from the desiderative aspersions of the learned.

B. *Tradition is accepted by smṛti. Precepts approved by smṛti have the seal of śruti. Hence scriptural authority cannot be denied to customary rites.*

Smṛti is the whole body of code of law handed down through memory or by tradition. The latter is the prescriptions directly perceived by the law-givers. No testimony is produced justifying the insertion of 'Kriyā' amidst the action of the play. Hence it is beyond the ambit of the smṛti codes. This being the case the question of its approval by śruti does not arise at all.

'Yes, authority is there; but it is elsewhere; or I have not learned it' such declarations will not help one to establish the validity of 'Kriyā'. The words forgotten or unlearned do not help, like hare-horns, to win the case in a dispute.

5. THAT WHICH IS NOT PROHIBITED IS GRANTED

A. *'That which is not forbidden is sanctioned.' None has prohibited 'Kriyā'. Hence its presence in the nāṭya is granted by authority.*

If the argument is extended further, the slaying of Kīcaka by Bhīma also will find a place in *Angulvāṅka*. It too is not forbidden.

B. *Kīcakavadha is irrelevant to the context.*

'Kriyā' too is irrelevant.

C. *Bharata has recognised it. He uses the term Pūrvāranga as a synonym to Kriyā.*

Pūrvāranga is a preparatory act prefixed to the prologue, 'Kriyā', is as irrelevant to Nāṭya as Kīcakavadha is to the story of Ramayana.

D. *Let such things also find a place in nāṭya.*

This will shake the very foundation on which the edifice of nāṭya is built up.

'Apply collyrium to the eyes'. Some one, hearing this, draws it on her cheeks and merrily justifies that the words do not prohibit it on the cheek. Strange indeed!

E. *Collyrium, one does not apply on the cheek since it is not found observed anywhere.*

The practitioner of the 'unprohibited' has to be reminded that customs emerge from injections.

F. *No. It is the otherway round. Often customary observances form the basis for instructions.*

Agreed. The instructions are of permanent nature, there is no instruction prescribing the performance of 'Kriyā'. If both the ordained and unordained are treated alike, the scriptures will cease to exert their authority. Hence only those ordained command our respect.

The expressions are of two kinds—exclusive and inclusive.

In the verse 'vāso valkalam'³ (Rama's dress was bark garments, abode the shades of trees etc.), the dress can as well be silk garments or the resting place palaces. The adjectives exclude these emerging possibilities. Hence the idea that Rama did not wear costly dress, or dwell in sophisticated houses is literally expressed through these adjectives. This is an example of an exclusive type of expression. On the other hand in the verse 'Sapatnīkasya Rāmasya'⁴ the adjective does not distinguish the meaning from anything else since there is no possibility of an alternate meaning i.e. Rama having another wife etc.,. Here they are not exclusive.

In the former example the denial of an alternate idea equally relevant to the context is expressed by the method of exclusion and in the latter the only meaning is expressed inclusively as there is no relevance for an alternate idea. In both the cases the cognition is only of the expressed.

Only those ideas expressly stated are acceptable. The unexpressed is beyond comprehension. 'Eat poison, eat not from this house'. The sentence means that taking food from this particular house is something more dangerous than eating poison. This is expressed by the power of *tātparyā*. Similarly, the statement that 'Devadatta has not come' conveys the idea that Devadatta has gone somewhere. The conclusion from all these is that only the ideas directly expressed are cognisable.

'Sanction for the forbidden' is limited to the areas where prohibition is imminent. ex. During the course of a discourse one declares — 'sound is non-eternal, because it is created, as the jar'. The Mīmāṃsaka should raise his objection that the proposition is based on fallacious reasons. On the other hand if he keeps quiet, the disputant can claim that the Mīmāṃsaka as he has not challenged, accepted his proposition. This rule is operative only on such occasions, i.e. when there is a possibility of prohibition. Here after 'samprati hi' the context does not demand the introduction of a dance. Hence there is no denial of an emerging possibility which can invoke the operation of the above rule.

G. If the explicitly expressed alone is permitted, dress and music will find no place in nāṭya since no mention is made of their inclusion.

The instruction of the dramatist is: 'then enters Rama.' The word Rama denotes the impersonator and not the real Rama. The actor cannot be faithful to the imitation without the dress and tongue of the character. Thus the word 'enters' expresses all that are related to the character. Lest the verb *praviśati* should have no object, the present tense has no significance. Reference to an object implies also the inseparable characteristics associated with it. *Praviśati* denotes all that are related to the character—dress, language, gesticulation, music etc.

The story is verbally narrated. The functions of the characters are indicated by their entry and exit; the tongue by the dialogue. Hence in the play we can accept only those that are directly expressed or implied.

H. The poet does not elaborate all the activities of the characters. Seeing Lanka Hanuman exclaims—Oh! the beauty of the city of Rākṣasas! The actor places the tip of his finger on the nose to express the amazement. This action of the actor is not stated by the author.

No. The exclamatory interjection-Aho!—conveys surprise. It is for the actor to find out suitable correlatives to translate the emotion into action. Verbal utterances are potential sources for bodily movements. The actors follow the modes of presentations prescribed in the acting manuals. The dramatist gives direction for the literally unexpressed movements—‘after entering’, ‘playing the lute’ etc. Though the desire is verbally expressed in instances like—‘If, a damsel the thousand eyes of Indra have a source for excitement’; the stage direction there—‘looking eagerly’ is to make the sense more explicit.

I. Actors practice things which are not stated in Nāṭyaśāstra.

According to *Nāṭyaśāstra* wonder is expressed by waving the fingers etc. The actor in *Aṅgulīyānka* does it by placing his finger-tips on the nose.

The etc. (ādi) implies this also. Moreover this action is only supplementary, not contradictory.

J. Let the actor then be a commentator - Vārtikakāra.

No. The actor is an imitator. He takes things as they are without addition or deduction.

K. Pāṇini did not prescribe forms in ātmanepada for asyati and ūhyati. Kātyāyana filled up the gap with his vārtika. (920 of sūtra 2701 in Siddhāntakaumudi). ‘When a prefix is adjoined asyati and ūhyati will have forms in ātmanepada too’ and derived samasyate and saūhate respectively. Similarly the actor too fulfills what is left out in the manuals.

The analogy is not applicable here. The original text forms the basis for additions. Pāṇini’s dictum ‘samo gamyrcch’ (2-6-99) derives ātmanepada forms like saṁgacchate. Kātyāyana bases his vārtika on this basic postulate. *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the original manual for an actor. It does not contain any reference to Kriyā. Hence the actor is not justified in adding Kriyā to the Nāṭya and justify it on the authority of Bharata.

6. SUMMARY

Even if it is accepted that there is authority and that is available the protagonist of ‘Kriyā’ does not escape from his predicament. Authority always goes along with propriety. The search for authority is futile for a thing that lacks propriety.

The ‘Kriyā’ mars the unfolding of the plot. It causes disastrous obstruction offending the finer aesthetic sentiments of the observer. Such being the case the authority professing its acceptability will not stand the test of propriety. The compatibility of sense rests mainly on the absence of absurdity in the mutual connection of things signified by the words. A sentence like ‘he waters the plants with fire’ fails to evoke any sense in the hearer.

Word is not an efficient cause, it is a reminder.

A potter makes the jar; it is manifested by the lamp.

If sanctity is accorded, at the risk of propriety to whatever is said, expressions like “he

holds on the tip of his finger a thousand elephants" will claim validity.

NOTES

1. D.S. III -2.
2. AC VI-1
3. AC I-9
4. AC I-4
5. Naganada I-16.

III. KRIYĀNṚTTA-CONCLUSION

1. ACCEPTENCE IS NOT THE CRITERION

A. 'Kriyā' has the authority of the approval of the connoisseurs, they have appreciated it.

The approval of spectators alone will not confer honour to any piece presented. A thing of beauty, though marred by blemishes, will be a source of joy. The moon, though spotted black, while rising up provides joy for all.

B. None has hitherto accused 'Kriyā' as a blackspot on nāṭya.

This is the reason. The wise take both the merits and defects. The merits they proclaim; the defects they swallow; like Lord Śiva.

Lord Śiva elevated the crescent-moon to his head
and arrested the poison kālākūṭa within his neck.

C. The wise do so. But there are others too. They have not condemned it.

The defect of a mango fruit everyone knows;
but the flaw of a jewel only one proficient in gemmology knows.

D. Then, why do you gun your words against the actors?

A scholar casts a chastising glance on the actor who falters in his dialogue; others deride him; a friend waits to correct him. Being a true friend of the actors, I do criticise their actions.

The 'Kriyā' starts after the words 'Samprati hi'. What relation do they see between the two? A word becomes meaningful only when understood in relation to the words or actions that follow. One calls 'Atreya' by name, then asks by gesture 'to come'. The word completed the idea when connected to the action that followed. On the contrary the extension or contraction of limbs after the utterance of 'samprati hi' makes no sense here.

Hanuman utters 'samprati hi' at the end of the narration of his antecedents. The action has no relation to that too. These bodily movements, anyhow, have to be correlated to something. If it is to the antecedents, then the 'Kriyā' will have to be preponed to that place.

The co-existence of 'Kriyā' and the text (samprati hi) is as disgusting as a pearl-garland on the bosom of an ascetic.

2. UNTIMELY INSERTION

This 'Kriyā' ends with a dance in praise of Lord Śiva. What is the nature of their mutual relation, cause-effect, complementing one another or anything else?

Having snapped its ties to both the ends, alas!,
This pious 'Kriyā', like Triśaṅku, hangs in the middle.
This 'Kriyā', useless in all respects, is like the teat nipple
that hangs down from the neck of a she-goat.

The actor impersonates as Hanuman and comes to the stage. Thenceforth the interest of the audience centres round the progress of the plot. They lose interest in the movements unconnected to the theme.

A. *The spectators, if they want the story alone, may very well go to hear the puranic recitals.*

No. They have interest in the imitation of pain and pleasure of their heroes.

B. *How the heroes, distanced by time, are visible to them? They are visualised by effective imitation.*

C. *Then why resort to songs and the like?*

Nāṭya is always accompanied by music-vocal and instrumental.

Poetry is the description of emotions;
nāṭya is their representation made attractive
by the accompaniment of music etc.¹

When the dialogue starts instruments are played low to facilitate better hearing, when the verses are on, the instruments lie low.

Of the three types of theatre-designs preference is to the middle type as it provides better audibility².

The point in short is this—

Rasa is the highway, as nāṭya is erected on its foundation.
Rasa centres round the plot. The plot through suitable
correlatives manifests the basic mental state immersing
the spectator in blissful enjoyment.

3. MEANING OF THE TERM KRIYĀ

Now, what does the word 'Kriyā' mean? Who named this dance as 'Kriyā'? Certainly, not the sage. He has scant respect for such pieces that intrude into the progress of the plot. Otherwise this would have found a reference somewhere in Nāṭyaśāstra.

A. *Bharata has discussed Pūrvaraṅga. One of its limbs is termed Karaṇa. As both 'Kriyā' and Karaṇa are the derivatives of the same root krñ, Bharata has used the term Karaṇa as a substitute for 'Kriyā'.*

The hunt for derivatives! Call it Kāra too. Siddhi can be substituted with lābha or sādhana; vṛtti by vartana, varta etc. All the limbs of nāṭya should be known by their own names; derivatives won't carry the same sense.

Moreover the Karaṇa forming part of Pūrvaraṅga is at the beginning, the 'Kriyā' is in

the middle of the story. Strange also is its nomenclature!

NOTES

1. Mahimabhaṭṭa quotes this verse in his *Vyaktiviveka*. Chapter I.
2. N.S. II-12.

IV. INCONGRUITIES IN ANGULĪYĀṆKA

1. HANUMAN'S DOUBT

The action of the story is resumed after the Kriyāṇṛta. It starts with a doubt expressed by Hanuman. How did it come to this position? Does it refer to the 'Kriyā' or the arrival at Lanka preceding it. Not the former; the answer does not suit it. The reference to the arrival is out of the mind by the uproar and confusion continued for a long time by the presentation of Kriyāṇṛta.

'How did I reach Lanka'?—The doubt can be of this nature also. Then who does entertain the doubt: the actor or Hanuman? Not the actor. His identity is concealed. As for Hanuman there is no reason for him to grow suspicious at this moment. Did he, on reaching Lanka, forget who he was, how and why he came there etc?

A. *The doubt is of the audience. Hanuman expresses it.*

How does Hanuman know the mind of the spectators, that they entertain a doubt and that it is of this nature? He had scant respect for their anxiety when he indulged on the physical exercise which, to their dismay, disrupted the development of the story. The spectators are inquisitive on the future course of action.

Having crossed the deep sea and stepping into Lanka, Hanuman is described as looking around the city sitting on the top of Trikūṭa mountain. There is thus no justification for him to wail over the present position.

2. NARRATION OF PAST INCIDENTS

The poet takes for granted that all that preceded his arrival are known to all.

A. *What is known to the poet need not be known to the spectator.*

The question is as absurd as asking how the details of the father of Rama or his forefathers are available. The actor should follow the path of the poet. The poet does not relate the story of their heroes from birth to death; or do they narrate all that has happened in their lives. They take up only what is necessary and leave out the rest. There too some incidents are elaborated, others are hinted at only. Hence the actor is bound to present the story as described by the poet. His preferences have no place here.

Some incidents are omitted as they are already known, some others find no place as they stand against the sentiments portrayed.

Repetition of the known is as profitless as of grinding the ground; If the void, omitted as non-entity is accepted, the sky lotus also will claim respect.

3. ACTORS SHOULD FOLLOW THE SCRIPT

There is no rule that one poet while depicting the life of his hero should take up what is left out by another. The actor should follow the particular poet whose work he is presenting; prompted very often by the aspersions regarding the advisability of addition and deduction, he would seldom be capable of presenting any piece on the stage. Since it is the play that is presented the actors should be faithful to the script.

What the poet has omitted, the actors should not add. The actors should keep themselves close to the heart of the poet. Four defects are dispensable in dramatic representation—

1. Addition of the incidents left out by the poet.
2. Omission of what the poet has described.
3. Elaboration beyond proportion to incidents slightly hinted.
4. Contraction of the instances elaborately depicted.

The poet has avoided the narration beginning from the union of Rama and Sugriva because everybody knows it. The attempt of the actor to elaborate it is not proper. The audience wait to see what follows after his arrival at Lanka. The least are they interested in the past events.

Why does the actor raise doubts on those things that the poet has left out as already known? Why does he hesitate to present the incidents of the future wherein lies the interest of the spectator?

4. NO NEED TO RELATE THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

A. This *Purvasambandha*—retrospective narration—is to relate the past to the present. The audience should be kept informed of the antecedents.

Hanuman is not competent to narrate it. Moreover the method of narration is also strange. Crossing the ocean prior to the arrival at Lanka. Prior to it the union with Malyavan, slaying of Bāli, separation of Sita and Rama, life in the forest, obstruction to the coronation etc, does anybody keep asking, time and again, 'What happened before this', 'what happened before this'?

B. *The present has to be linked to the past.*

It cannot be achieved depending on irrelevant hesitations Ramayana or Mahabharata does not provide a clue for this technique.

C. *This is the method adopted in visuals.*

Why, then, is it not seen followed consistently? This narration is absent in 'yāni yāni manojñāni'. There too the antecedents can be related India's defeat, the war preceding it, Ravana's journey to heaven, departure from Lanka, hearing the words of Narada, etc.

D. *Pūrvasambandha is related only at the end of the 'Kriya'.*

There is 'Kriya' in eṣām Pallava.² This is absent there.

E. *It is not possible to narrate it there.*

It could very well be done there also. Arise a doubt. How did this sprout come out?

Then narrate it — the emergence of buds preceded by branches, trunk, root etc.

F. This is done only at the end of a 'Kriya' performed for the first time.

Alas! A mere proposition! How shrunk is your reasoning! The rat (hare?) that I saw had horns!

5. REPUDIATION OF THE ASSUMED ROLE

The story begun in the first person, in course of its development, turns out to be in the third person. What is the rationale behind it? What prompts Hanuman to shun himself.

A. The story of Hanuman can be depicted in both ways—as narrated by himself or by someone else; then why this apprehension?

It is alright. But the same thing cannot be represented differently.

B. The story is not the same, it comprises instances of varied nature.

No, it is the same when described by Hanuman.

C. Yet it is different in its component parts.

That part which is different, does it form part of the whole? Is it a continuum of the one started. If a continuous story, it should be presented, as begun, in the first person till the end. If not continuity will have no relevance.

D. Ravana speaks in the third person in this verse — the arrows of the forest — dweller are grass-shoots to Ravana³.

These are the words of the dramatist. He is the authority here. The actor, like the poet, has no liberty to shift to any person as he likes.

Moreover, the poet uses the third person with a definite purpose. It suggests the unrivalled valour of Ravana. Similarly the words of Śaṅkhacūda in *Nāganānda*— 'Śaṅkhacūda will never call for anything that will tarnish the shell-like fame of the lineage of Śaṅkhaṇḍa' are suggestive of the fidelity of the character to his master. Again in 'Śaṅkhacūda, what have you done?' the address to the self in third person is suggestive of his melancholy mood.

In the present context there is no such special significance justifying the alienation of self from the character.

In the verse "tasmin plavagaśārdule", 'tasmin' should be replaced by "mayi" as "asmi", in "Lankām prāptosmi". Hanuman here broods over his own action. The musical representation of it is 'he did it' anyhow lacks propriety.

The actor initially presents Hanuman as an outsider—'that Hanuman reached Lanka'. Then he concludes—'I have reached Lanka'. The self denial of Hanuman is contradictory.

E. This indicates the change of the agents of action. He who has thus reached Lanka is myself. This is similar to the story of Mārīca in Daśakumāracarita. This kind of change in the meaning is necessitated to avoid the incoherence of the meaning.

If this be the intention, the actor should show by some device the terminus of the former personation and insertion of another. This should be the method of presentation of

the verse, 'mainākam nāgakanyā'.. The first part is the description of the mountain as seen by Hanuman. Then in the second part the mountain comes forward and at the instruction of Varuna, greets Hanuman. The change of agents of action should be marked clearly.

6. IMITATION OF ONE CHARACTER IN ANOTHER'S COSTUME

There is a tendency among the actors to imitate a character, in the dress and make up of another whose character he has originally assumed. The propriety of this has to be questioned.

Detailing the process of imitation Bharata has prescribed four kinds of *abhinaya*:

- i. Gestural-conveyed by bodily actions
- ii. Vocal-conveyed by words
- iii. Internal-communicated through the manifestations of inner feelings and
- iv. Extraneous-understood by dress, ornaments, decorations, etc.

All the four should go together, each complementing the others. The absence of any one of them will cause deformity to the imitation.

Natya is erected on the foundation of these four-fold acting accomplished through various means.⁶

This being the case, the actor after assuming the character of Hanuman by dress is not justified in imitating, in the same make-up and setting, the moods of Rama.

Oh! Greatest of the monkeys, neither Lakshmana nor myself is the overlord in this matter.⁷

These words of Rama are presented by Hanuman expressing the sentiments of Rama. The expression of one by costume and other by gesture is the seizure of propriety in its throat. Imagine the fate of rasa, the very soul of natya. [Anandavardhana observed⁸.]

There is no other cause for a breach of sentiment than indecorum.

The greatest secret about sentiment is conformity to well known consideration of propriety.

Wonderful indeed is the imitation

Of the effeminate elegant movements of Sita

In the robe of a monkey

With a tail hanging behind!

Imitate one by dress, another by gesture! Who did advise this!

Where did the actor learn it from: the scriptures or the world?

A. *It is quite easy to imitate one in suitable costumes. But, this is a clever device, more exciting. The spectators endowed with impartial critical acumen to adjudge the good and bad have found it extraordinarily exhilarating.*

O! Great scholar! What kind is this cleverness? The actor attired as Hanuman thinks in his mind—'I am Rama'. Will this alone elevate the actor to the psychic level of Rama by which you can boast of your cleverness to have accomplished its purpose.

B. *The actor, as he expresses by gesture the pensive mood, pangs of separation etc. related to Rama has fully identified with him.*

But the aesthetic sensibility of the spectator refuses to accept the one whom he witnesses before him, with long tail and the crow-eyes, as Rama. He takes him only as a monkey and being what it is, does something quite befitting to its fickleness.

Let him be identified with Rama. The gesture and costume here refers to different things—dress to Hanuman, gesture to Rama. What is the nature of their mutuality—Similar or comparable?

Not the former. The emotions presented as of Rama attired as a monkey are not on a par with those of the real Rama. In the case of comparison—the identity is perfect when the imitated character is in his real dress. Appreciation also determines the process of identification. It can also be verified by affirmative and negative reasoning. Wherever there is suitable costume, there the identity is complete; whenever it is lacking, identity also is lacking.

Cleverness, now, has to be defined. Is it a perfect acting or a deformed one? If the former is accepted as correct, this deformed mood of acting becomes a symbol of 'uncleverness'. The cleverness, so much extolled, would have been unhurt, had the actor any magical spell to evoke, on demand, the required costume with the extinction of the unwanted. The poor actor is helpless. He is neither able to keep away the costume which is not required, nor to produce like sky lotus, the suitable one on demand. The gestures are the principal agents, extraneous appearance being subservient.

C. By the skilful employment of gestures audience does not feel the difference in costumes. They realise and relish the imitation.

Our experience is contrary to this. If Hanuman is seen as Rama then this is a case of 'parinama'—transformation. A thing that has transformed itself to something else will not be able to retreat to its earlier position. Milk once changed into curd never regains its nature as milk. The absence of attire suited to the character and the addition of suit designed for another—both do not exhibit the cleverness of the actor.

The so called exhilaration of the audience is fallacious. Actually, on seeing the facial expressions discordant to the appearance, their hearts tremble at their ill-fate for being condemned to witness the goblin-dances of diabolic designs.

D. The actor as he is alone has to present roles of different characters.

The dramatic performance is to be carried out by a group. What will the actor do in the absence of the musician? Will he take up his part too?

E. This is nāṭyadharmī and we have the authority of Bharata⁹.

If, an actor after assuming one role takes up, out of cleverness or out of non-availability of other actors, the role of another character, it can be treated as *nāṭyadharmī*.

You have based these licentious actions on this authority! Alas! The meaning of the Karika is grossly misunderstood: Listen to the true meaning of it:

Of the several characters in a play one retires on completion of his role. He later appears on the stage as another character in the proper context wearing the dress of that character. When one character is on the stage all the others are expected to be there around. This is not observed here. Hence it is *nāṭyadharmī*. The cleverness of the character rests in his ability of skillful handling of different roles. The actor is one in different costumes, hence the reference to 'one' in the verse.

The former interpretation, if accepted, will contradict the earlier statements of *Nāṭyasāstra*. For example¹⁰:

The actor whose grace and gait remain steady should, till he leaves

the stage, keep it up without loss of his self-being.

The actor who displays gestures contradicting his costumes, loses his inherent nature. The acceptance of a different costume is also not proper.

Moreover the contradiction to dramatic practices is explicit. All the three are components of *āhārya*. Hence no claim for protection under *Nāṭyadharmī*. The inclusion among *lokadharmī* is out of question.

7. HANUMAN IMITATES SITA

When the actor in the role of Hanuman begins to imitate Sita, ties up in front the tip of the garment. What is it for?

A. *This is to indicate the feminine character, for women generally wear the garments like this.*

What will you do to imitate a bee? You cannot accomplish the impersonation of Sita by this action alone.

Hanuman by the tail behind; Sita by the robe in front. The dexterity indeed of your preceptor in make-up and costumes

Female characters, much against your liking, have to be presented on the stage in person. The present practice has to be reviewed. In *Kalyanasaugandhika*¹¹ Draupadi is not brought to stage. Instead the actor dressed as Bhima enacts her role. To refrain from further deviation it is summed up thus:

The actor simultaneously assimilates the monkey in dress and Rama by gesture. This situation is awkward.

8. INTER-MIXTURE OF IMITATED CHARACTERS

Intermixing the imitated characters is a practice condemned by all. [Poet Magha describes¹²]

The play, like delicate food, satisfies all providing *rasa* achieved through the non-mingling of characters (also plates).

A. *The story of Rama also has to be presented to the audience.*

Yes. But the procedure should be in conformity with the one already stated. Eg. While enacting 'I have reached Lanka', the actor does not turn out to be Lanka, he only suggests the city by hand-gestures.

It is the make-up that gives the first clue to the audience regarding the assumed role of an actor. [Says Bharata¹³]

The assumed roles first indicated by the make up are realised without effort by their gestures.

B. *If each character has to be presented in his own costume, how can the actor imitate all of them?*

The only way is to employ separate actors with dress and ornaments suited for each character. If a single actor can present all the characters why do you choose Hanuman to do it? Lakshmana who entered in *Paṇṣālāṅka* (I act) will present all the episodes and characters that follow. Then the instruction in the text regarding the entry and exit of

different characters will have no meaning. Also the stipulation of the manuals¹⁴ that one act comprises of three or four characters will become invalid.

C. The characters described by the dramatist should find a place on the stage.

Only the imitated characters need be presented on the stage. The one the poet has introduced here is Hanuman and not Rama.

Who does imitate Rama here—the actor or Hanuman? Not the actor he is immersed in personating Hanuman. There is no reason for Hanuman to imitate Rama. Anyhow, if he does it, he would, as the actor did while personating Hanuman, wear the robes that suit the status of Rama.

D. If all these referred to by the poet in the drama are to be personally presented on the stage, the maināka mountain, the nāga girls etc. also will have to be brought to the stage in their costumes.

Yes. This also falls on your own head. You want all the characters to be brought on the stage. Going through the canons we hold a different view.

9. IMITATED AND REFLECTED CHARACTERS

There are two kinds of characters—the imitated and the reflected. The imitated is that character whose entry the poet has permitted in the text. The reflected characters are those who live only in references. The poet has not described their entry. Those two may change their positions according to the context. A reflected character, in one context, may be an imitated in another or vice-versa. Thus in *Aṅgulīyāṅkam*, Hanuman is the imitated character and Rama is a reflected character. In 'hatva Balinam'¹⁵, Hanuman, like Bāli and others is reflected; Rama in Act VII is an imitated character.

What is meant by imitation or reflection. Transformation, by skillful act, of the self-being to another is imitation. On seeing the actor on the stage personating as Hanuman, the spectators feel—'he is Hanuman'. Reflection is remembrance. The one who is recollected by the imitated character is a reflected character. It can be grouped into two—direct or indirect. The former is the one that stands before the eyes of the imitated character. E.g: 'Esam pallava'. The source of amazement, the plants and buds in the garden are directly perceived by Hanuman. In contrast, the indirectly reflected character is embodied in his memory alone. Eg: "Vrthā mayā samudro laṅghitah". The ocean is not before his eyes now, it is only recollected. The reflected characters both—direct and indirect—are causes of states of pain and pleasure.

Indirectly reflected character—when the imitated character presents the incidents of past, present or future of his own or of someone else he will not actually be moved by the emotions. His mission ends with the mere communication through the medium of vocal gesticulations. Example :-

1. Hanuman recollects: On the advice of Jaṭāyu I crossed the ocean and arrived at Lanka.
2. Hanuman tells Sita: The great Rama, though bold, became like the ocean, fickle when he felt that Sugriva is not interested in the matter of finding out Sita.
3. At the end of the act Hanuman consoles Sita: After slaying all the Rakshasas, throwing away his bow and arrow, Rama will come and tie up your loosened hair.
4. The emotions of reflected characters also will have to be expressed. Otherwise the

pangs of separation of Rama as expressed in the verse 'maratakaruco' will fail to evoke any response in the spectator.

What a great calamity! If the expression of emotions of the reflected character too is insisted on, what then does differentiate the reflected from the imitated.

B. The difference is that the imitated is present on the stage in person, the reflected is not.
What then is the reason for the absence on the stage, of the reflected?

C. The reflected, as he is not provided with the make up for the character, cannot enter on the stage.
Why the costume is not provided?

D. Costumes are provided only to those whom the spectators are desirous of watching.
Then why do you take the trouble to present the reflected, whom the audience does not want.

E. The reflected characters are also visually presented. When the actor presents the serpent, bear, fish, tortoise etc. the spectators feel their actual presence.

That is at the time of imitating them, not on the occasion of remembrance since the serpent etc. have ceased to exist when they are recalled to the mind. The gesticulation will be meaningless if the object continues to be realised even in its absence. The imitation of the original character suppresses the impression gained through hand gestures. When the actor impersonated as Hanuman presents the pangs of separation of Rama, it evokes no response in the spectator since they see Hanuman alone before their eyes. Labouring to visualise the situation where it does not exist is like trying to trace the splendour of a jewel which has already been lost. The actor, if only he succeeds in tracing the vanished splendour, need try to present the emotions of the reflected character.

Moreover situations like pain and pleasure can be presented only through facial expressions. The reflected characters as they are devoid of limbs other than those of the imitated characters are unable to present such situations.

F. The reflected characters like Rama do not have eyes?
No. Rama is gesticulated as a forefinger or bow and arrow.

G. The actor has eyes.
They are of the actor, not of Rama.

H. The imitator of Rama becomes Rama himself.
As the identity is complete, needless, then, is gesticulation.

I. Identity is confined to the period of imitation.

The monkey dress forbids the notion of identification. Even if identity is admitted, the situations are absent during the period preceding the imitation and following it. The inevitable consequence will be the emergence of a situation in absentia.

J. The forefinger etc. is used to differentiate Rama from the imitated.

The attempt, then, is to present the emotions of Rama who is conspicuously absent.

K. The imitated character relates the tormented psyche of Rama separated from Sita during the rainy season. The pain is of Rama. Hanuman merely imitates it.

How many times was the position reiterated repeatedly! Does the pain of Rama presented by Hanuman bear any semblance to the same expressed by Rama himself in the other Act? On both the occasions, external manifestations, are the same. Cause and effect always work in apposition. As the resultant manifestations are seen in Hanuman, their cause, the mental condition, should also reside with him. It ceases to be related to Rama. The ambition to correlate the manifestations in one to the mental conditions of another is really strange.

The sentiments are manifested through their resultant expressions.

One who is seen melancholic with deep sigh is sad. The wide eyes and expanded cheeks indicate happiness. The red-eyed is angry. The mental state and manifestations always co-exist. Thus the emotions expressed here are of Hanuman.

L. This be the case, the imitator of Rama becomes Rama himself.

He possesses the properties of Rama, not Rama. Their relation is not that of inseparable inherence, because Rama has concrete body and attributes; not of union, both are distanced by time. The mutuality is that of rememberer-remembered or of receiver-received.

M. How, then, can the sentiments of reflected characters be presented?

It need not be imitated. You were repeatedly reminded that the mental dispositions of the imitated alone need be presented.

N. 'Oh! dear Janaki our mothers might perhaps have departed to the heaven unable to bear the sorrow caused by the demise of our father'¹⁶ In these words of Rama over the death of Dasaratha, is the śoka (sadness) to be abandoned?

Here the śoka has to be expressed only through hand gestures unaccompanied by the auxiliaries like sigh and distress. If they too are employed the mood of the imitated will suffer alienation. These are the words of Rama. He conjunctures the death of the mothers. Doubt is a secondary mood. Sadness is primary sentiment. That order does not present here, as vitarka in comparison to śoka occupies more space. Śoka is only in the second line the rest is vitarka. Though vitarka is more extensive, it cannot claim the status of sthāyin since the authority does not grant it.

It is said that nirveda etc., as they are not long lasting are not relished.¹⁷

Śoka and vitarka are not related as cause and effect. Śoka rests in the mother, vitarka in Rama. Even if they are appositional they are opposites. Śoka rises out of the definiteness of calamity, vitarka is of the nature of doubt. The vitarka is opposed to soka.

Of the two vitarka, as it rests on imitated, is more important. Hence it is not proper for vitarka to oppose śoka, which forms the basis of the departure of mothers to heaven. Hence śoka needs only a reference to it, not elaborate imitation through expressions.

The fear in the verse 'Bhayaparavāṣe'¹⁸ is also similar to this.

O. Does it mean that hand gesture alone unaccompanied by ocular expression is needed

for the representing serpents etc?
Yes, what is your objection?

P. Objection; there is: The hand gesture has to be accompanied with corresponding facial expressions. The serpent is presented by the fore-finger fully bend, a peculiar look and raising the tongue with a hissing sound. The finger indicates its form, tongue and sound character and the eye its looks.

The look and tongue of a serpent is not proper in a non-serpent.

Q. By hand gesture alone how serpentness can be realised in Hanuman.
Hand gesture alone is permitted by Nāṭyaśāstra.

R. The hand gesture comes under Citrābhinaya. It is the representation of mental conditions. The abstract state of mind will be relishable only when presented along with suitable facial expressions.

It will result in the break-down of the identity with Hanuman.

S. All the hand gestures have to be performed with corresponding ocular and facial expressions.¹⁹

Thus while presenting the serpent, the hand gesture should accompany facial expressions.

The meaning of the verse is not understood properly. This is the meaning. The word 'rañcita' means not contradicting. The actors should resort to such hand gestures which do not contradict the ocular or facial expressions. The adjective 'yathāvidhi' indicates that the expressions are related to the imitated. Ocular movements are prescribed only for him. The following verse also should be read in this light.²⁰

Similarly other hand-gestures, wordly and meaningful, also may be employed freely along with the depiction of emotions.

There is another verse.²¹

In dance performances and other representations the hand poses should be employed so as to form a *Karana*—a series of actions in a given sequence. For this the accompaniment of the movements of actor's face, eyes and eye-brows are necessary.

If the above verses are not interpreted in this way, the implication of these instruction [of Bharata] will be lost.²²

In the case of action relating to people afflicted with diseases, fever, emaciated by penance, overcome with fear, intoxicated, inebriated, worried and suffering cold, hand poses should not be used. In these instances only those arising out of their self need be employed.

Here the sage has prohibited the hand gestures fearing that the gesture if used will diminish the effect of the concentrated emotion of sadness in the imitated. Hence [according to Bharata] gestures should always be non-contradictory to the emotion portrayed.

T. The intention of the sage is otherwise: the hand gestures should always be in accordance with the ocular expression.

No. Then the dress-mood equation established earlier will suffer.

The innate feeling rests on the eyes. The sentiment indicated by the eye is manifested through gestures.²³

The moods and emotions referred to here relate to the imitated character. There is no relevance for the inflected character on it. Hence the eyes are always indulged in the expression of the psychic conditions of the imitated. It will not follow the moods of the reflected character.

If the imitated character depicts the emotions of the reflected character too; does he do it retaining his self-being or not. If the answer is negative it will not be relished in the absence of *bhava*. If it is affirmative he has to rely on ocular gesticulation to express the sentiments.

Then, whether the presentation of the emotions of the reflected is after the termination of the moods of the imitated or along with it. In the former case *nāṭya* itself will lose its character. As the reflected characters are subservient to the imitated and also as the ocular gesticulations are not accepted for the expression of their sentiments, the latter proposition has to be accepted. Then the eyes fixed on the sentiments of the imitated can move nowhere else. The lips, face, and eyelids should follow the eyes. Hence while depicting the serpent no facial expression should accompany the hand gestures. The *citrābhinaya* is related only to the representation of emotions depicted in the script. It cannot deviate from that.

The dress should be suited to the age, the gait and movements to the dress; Words follow the gait and gesticulation is done in accordance with the words.²⁴

The imitated character is the instructor, reflected is instructed. There is a wide range of difference between the two. Thus Hanuman who is reflecting on Rama cannot identify himself to a jar. He is the same, different from the jar, when he instructs.

When Hanuman says that 'I will bring Ravana after tying him'²⁵ or 'there was a king named Dasaratha the overlord of horses and elephants'²⁶, Hanuman never changes himself to Ravana or Dasaratha.

Bharata has enumerated the mode of representations as belonging to two aspects.²⁷

The mode of representations are *lokadharmi*—as actually seen in the world and *nāṭyadharmi* as represented in a drama following certain conventions.

No where here does the sage prescribe the change of an imitated character to the reflected.

W. 'Devadatta, transformed as a jar, knows the jar and shines like the jar'. This dictum is applicable here.

Duals are not bound by the tenets of non-dual. Further extended, the vedantic notions will cause the very extinction of *Nāṭya*. The former is erected on the foundation of non-difference of the objects and detachment to worldly pleasures. *Nāṭya* on the other hand is oriented in action and tended in the variety of things in the universe.

One who has become jar, as he is identified with it, does not know the jar. Cognition is possible only when the receiver is different from the receiver.

On his transformation to the jar does Devadatta retain his attributes or transforms it to some where else. Not the former. Both are not appositional. No horseness is possible in an elephant. So jariness is not attributable to Devadatta.

In the latter do his attributes go to that jar or to some other jar. If to that jar, Devadatta has been transformed into jar or jar has been transformed into Devadatta. Both the propositions are the same. Then what he lost in his original position has gone to another

jar, that too to another. All the objects thus become non-differential and at the end one attribute will remain with none to depend on. Attribute cannot stay independently. Then it is better for it to go back to the original. By this process the inter-dependence of objects and attributes will suffer with the result that any one will realise a jar in a cloth or the like.

Devadatta shines in the form of the jar. What nature is this shining? Either jarness or awareness as jar. Not the former. It will not be useful to bring water. In the latter it requires another knower. Then the non-duality is lost.

Oh: Great scholar: stop with your jargon which lack any authority. You are a master in Nāṭya, in *advaita* as well:

X. If Rama is only a reflected character why this hand gestures for him. Finish with a cold reference. The actor until he completes the contemplation may stand still and retire.

What is your intention? Do you want to establish that those presented by the hand gestures also are of the imitated? Then it becomes that Hanuman imitates Rama.

Y. That we do accept.

After becoming Rama the story of Sugriva is narrated. Then Rama imitates Sugriva?

Z. That too we accept.

What do you gain by attributing imitatedness to Rama. Going one step further he presents the autumnal season. Then as the season has no concrete shape, the imitator becomes abstract and alas! vanishes in the air.

Z i. Having lived in the distant past Rama is invisible even now.

No, when imitated the audience feels his presence. That Rama will disappear. Then the imitated Hanuman, then the actor,. All will vanish in the air.

Z ii. If reflection is not imitation, why use the text? The sound and gestures as they are perceptible are not recollection. This is the nature of cognition. Knowledge is not perceptible, as it resides inside. Otherwise the knowledge of Devadatta will be perceptible to Yanjadatta. Hanuman did not use any sound or gesture on seeing Sita. Instead he thought in his mind.

'This is she for whom Rama suffers the fourfold pangs of separation'.²⁸

Why do you ask us? You hold the banner of scholarship. Nāṭya is your heritage. Anyway, as you have asked, we will offer our comments.

Bharata has introduced Nāṭya to entertain the people by the relish of *rasa*. *Rasa* depends on the delineation of incidents in the life of great people like Rama. Nāṭya is its highest form of realisation. The image gives pleasure more than the original. A man in his person does not generate the interest as when he is seen sculptured.

The actor concealing himself by dress and make-up portrays the emotions of another whose role he enacts.²⁹

The realisation of the character in the actor is accomplished by the exterior appearance. The language though imagined is seen as his own. The instruments and music are also similar. The states of pain and pleasure is conveyed through his facial expressions. The best medium for communicating the inner feelings is language.

There is no cognition in the world that does not follow the sound.³⁰

That communicated through sound resides in the word. Mental conditions depend on it.

All efforts should be concentrated on the words as they form the very body of *natya*.³¹

Hence these words-

Ho! lend thy ears with minds centred on it to the words of Kalidasa.³²

Thus in the matter of contemplation the instruction is to think it by words; not speaking. This is the practice followed by the actors;

The peculiarity of gestures, expressed vaguely, is termed *citrābhinaya*.³³

The enactment by female characters is also a time-old practice. The bodily movements are the expansion and contraction of limbs achieved by constant practice. They signify on the authority of *Nāṭyaśāstra* the mental conditions and objective ideas portrayed on the stage. This is like the cognition of the meaning from the imprints of letters. The bodily movements are the alphabet of Nāṭya. Thus it is established that the imitation of the moods in contradiction to the dress is not proper.

10. EXPOSITION BY ACT-CHARACTERS

Calling from a distance, killing etc. presented through the characters of the act do not seem proper. Such things have to be intimated to the audience through introductory scenes. The characters of the act presenting them directly is against the principles of *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

Call from a distance, killing, war, revolution, eating, bathing, intercourse, balming, pulling by cloth-such things should not be shown directly on the stage.³⁴

These principles have to be followed in *Tapātisamvaraṇa* and *Subhadrādhanañjaya*, also.

11. REPETITION

Repetition, several, times of an incident by the same character or by different characters in an act is not befitting to the principles of dramaturgy. It is prohibited in the whole of a drama, not to speak of an act.

An incident once presented, if requires to be retold has to be done through action in the ears of the hearer. Repeated narration has to be avoided.³⁵

12. DISFIGURING OF ŚŪRPAṆAKHĀ.

In the second act of *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi*, while disfiguring Śūrpaṇakhā, the actors through external make-up, present the cutting of her breasts too. What is the authority for this? Not the text. There it is described:

The ear and nose of the demoness were cut.³⁶

Valmiki also does not refer to the breasts

'Drawing his sword, when spoken to in these words, the angry Lakshmana, who was possessed of great might, lopped off her ears and nose while Rama looked on.'³⁷

This incident, thus, owes its origin to the mischievous imagination of the actors.

NOTES

1. AC VI-2
2. AC VI-4
3. AC V -28

4. Nāgānanda - IV
 5. VR - Sundarakanda -I.87
 6. NS VIII -8
 7. VR -Kiskindhakanda -XXXX. 12
 8. Dhvanyāloka III 70
 9. NS -VIII
 10. NS -XXV -120
 11. *Kalyāṇasaugandhika* is a drama, belonging to *vyāyoga* type, of a Kerala author Nīlakaṇṭha of 9th C.A. D. This was very much popular on the Kerala stage.
 12. *Śīsupālavadha* of Māgha. XIV. 50
By using simile combined with double entendre the poet compares the delicious food to the enjoyment of a play. *Pātrasaṅkara*-intermixture of plates, also of characters.
 13. NS. XXI-4.
 14. DR - III - 37. also NS XVIII. 26
 15. ACN VII-II
 16. ACN III -5
 17. DR IV- 36
 18. AC III -26
 19. NS IX -163
 20. NS. IX -157
 21. NS IX.-209
 22. NS IX-178
 23. NS XIII -30
 24. NS XIII -64
 25. VR-Sundarakanda. I. 42
 26. VR-XXXXXI-4
 27. NS -VI-25
 28. VR Sundarakanda -V.49
 29. NS- XXI. 83
 30. *Vākyapaṭīya* of Bhartṛhari
 31. NS XIV. 2
 32. *Vikramorvaṣīya* -Prologue
 33. NS XXV-1
 34. DR. III-34 -35.
 35. NS XXV-93
 36. AC II-13
 37. VR - III- 18-21
- AC - *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi*.
VR - *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa*.
NS - *Nāṭyaśāstra*.
DR - *Daśarūpaka*.

V

MANTRĀNKAM - A Criticism

In Mantrānkam (Act III-*Pratinjāyugandharāyaṇa*) the jester Vasantaka speaks in the regional language—Malayalam. The propriety of this shift to the local dialect has to be discussed. Tradition has specified the tongue to be used by the characters belonging to each category.

Those of the first variety (*uttama*) speak in Sanskrit. Female characters, in general, use Prākṛt dialects. The lowest category (*adhama*) adhere to Śauraseni.¹

Accordingly Bhasa in his text gives Prākṛt to Vasantaka. The actor should invariably follow the dramatist. Hence this deviation to the local tongue is not justified.

A. *Vasantaka knows all the languages. While acting incognito he has to adopt the language of the people and of that region. Simultaneously he retains the Prākṛt text. The local dialect used is in addition to this.*

Why then Yaugandharāyaṇa who also acts in disguise stick to Sanskrit? He too knows other languages. What is the criterion to decide the language of a character in the drama? Does the character use the language acquired by him, or his own mother-tongue or some other language? Not the acquired; the female characters may, then, use Sanskrit and the principal character the Prākṛt. Not their mother tongue; the language prevalent in the north Kosala region is the mother tongue of Sri Rama not Sanskrit. It is the language only of gods. Hence the language used by a character should be the one prescribed for that character by dramatic convention. This, one knows from the text of the drama. The actors should strictly conform to it.

When occasion demands a change can be effected to the tongue. But it should be necessitated by the situation imitated by the character. The re-affirmation of an idea already established is to facilitate its adherence.

B. *By the adoption of local dialect nāṭya becomes more enjoyable. Devoid of it the performance loses its flavour; people fail to understand what is presented.*

Then the regional languages alone will suffice, leave out the Prākṛts completely. H: the ignorance of great poets: they embrace such a prosaic medium as the Prākṛt when the attractive dialects are available in abundance:

The presumption that Prākṛt lacks lustre and serenity is contrary to the experience. Tradition has attested to their beauty. Listen to these words:

i. The Prākṛt is incessantly enchanting.

ii. Oh: how charming is Prākṛt:²

The language employed by the poet lacks beauty, it is not useful; this street-chattering is exquisitely enchanting:

C. *The local dialect also is equally enchanting.*

No. There is no relevance here for comparison with another language. The local dialect is a non-existent component as far as the performance is concerned. Similitude is between two things that exist. If this is accepted the denial of Prākṛt to the principal character also will have to be reviewed.

D. The language of the principal character is pre-determined by the canons of dramaturgy.

Vasantaka also is bound by the same rule. The actor is not at liberty to choose the language of his taste for Vasantaka.

E. This is permitted by the authority.³

Actions befitting the particular region, language, behaviour, dress etc should be known from the world and presented appropriately.

The instruction is to the dramatist, not to the actor⁴

The dramatist may at his pleasure employ the vernaculars in a play since the themes of dramas are originated in different regions.

2. LOCAL LANGUAGE—NO SOURCE OF LAUGHTER

If you still insist that the actor is free to allot the dress and tongue to the characters, you will also have to spell out in specific terms the principles governing the concept of propriety.

A. Propriety in the given case is the efficacy to cause laughter. What does cause laughter?

B. The adoption of local dialect is the source of laughter. The cause-effect relation betrays reciprocal dependence. The cause of laughter is local dialect; local dialect is given to the one who causes laughter.

C. He who has jocular words and actions is the source of amusement.

Then Rumanvan escapes from the realm of local dialect. His narration in regional language of the medicines exhibited in the market evokes laughter. Here the dialect itself becomes the source of merriment. Then it turns out to be a good example for the flaw of self-dependence or mutual-dependence. Otherwise, as shown above, reciprocal dependence cannot be ruled out.

As it is the use of local language that has helped Rumanvan to evoke laughter, Yaugandharayana also will have to effect a change in his tongue to regional language since he too is not totally bereft of humour. Vasantaka too does not always evoke laughter.

D. The deformed nature of Rumanvan causes laughter.

Such things can be attributed even to the great sages like Vasistha.

E. Laughter is aroused when all the three-words, dress and form are unnatural.

All the three are seen combined in Yaugandharayana, yet he does not cause amusement in the audience.

F. The dress of Yaugandharayana cannot be termed unnatural or mutilated since he is depicted as a wanderer by the dramatist.

This equally applies to Rumanvan; by nature he is a Buddhist monk.

G. The local language is allotted only to the light-hearted characters.

Neither Vasantaka nor Rumanvan is light-hearted. They are the able ministers of king

Udayana. The servant-maids do not use the local dialect. Are they so great?

3. LOCAL LANGUAGE OF JESTER

A. The local language is given to the jesters.

How does Rumanvan use it? He is not a jester.

B. Jesters invariably use local language. For others it is optional.

What then is the criterion for non-jester characters to use it?

Two things—contradicting each other, cause the same effect. Attributes of a jester and of a non-jester are contradictory. Here these two become causes for the use of local language. Strange reasoning indeed! Dew-lap as well as its absence are the attributes of cowness!

C. Characters use the language of their choice.

This is not permissible. Even Rama will then shift to regional language.

D. The principal characters are not allowed to have the choice. How will, then, you explain the language of Citrayodhi in Āścaryacūḍāmṇi? The conclusion of all these is this—

The adoption of local language is a telling display of the actors unrestrained temptations to exhibit their garrulity.

What has been said above with reference to Vasantaka is applicable to Parāśarya, Kaundinya, Śaṇḍilya and others.³

4. ILLICIT RELATIONS OF BRAHMINS

In course of this merry-making the actor indulges in elaborate descriptions of illicit relations of Brahmins with the women of low-castes. The association of Brahmins with prostitutes is not proper. That with the women of Sudra-caste is permitted by moral codes. But seeking conjugal relations with another's wife is prohibited for all. The union of a Brahmin with another's wife of the low class surpasses all limits of decency. The permission granted to the Brahmins to woo the women of their own caste and those of the low-born is confined to the unmarried girls in conformity with the prescribed order⁴.

A Śūdra woman alone can be the wife of a Śūdra; he and a Vaiśya of a Vaiśya; they two and a Kṣatriya of a Kṣatriya; those three and a Brahmana of a Brahmin.

Forgetting all these the actors shamelessly proclaim the amorous sports of the respected Brahmins with the low-born women in an assembly of gentlemen. This has to be condemned by all means. Such descriptions bring respectability to this vulnerable act since the actors do not present this as a practice to be discarded.

Such illicit connections found somewhere due to peculiar reasons pertaining to that region do not have the strength to strike down the long-drawn traditions reaffirmed by the observance of the learned.

In the valley of Kashmir lotuses flower in rainy season too. No poet will describe, on the strength of this, the abundance of lotus flowers in monsoon.

In the island of Ceylon the sprouts come out of mango trees even in rainy season. Poets do not take this an excuse to depict the season with full-blown mango sprouts.

At times the moon appears in the sky during rainy season. But description of the monsoon-nights with full-moon splendour evokes laughter.

Poets portray the cheeks of young women embellished with decorative drawings. Nowhere is it seen in the world.

The women of Kerala usually keep their breasts exposed. But they are presented on the stage with their bosom covered.

The actors, therefore, should present only those which are widely accepted by tradition. Whatever is said or expressed in an assembly should lead to the virtuous path. This is doubly so in a performance since Nāṭya along with providing pleasurable enjoyment, imparts instruction that leads to the right path. Bharata has explicitly stated this-

Nāṭya is intended to be the source of virtue, fame, longevity, pleasure, tonic to the intellect and instruction for the well-being.⁷

Hence the narration of incidents implicating the venerable Brahmins in the affairs of low-born women cuts at the very root of the moral codes.

The description of such instances never enhances the enjoyment of humour. The lack of propriety offends the sensibility.

5. PRINCIPLES OF POLICY

In Mañtrāṅkam the actor with great enthusiasm goes on to elaborate in bombastic terms the principles of polity.

The self-restrained and good-natured monarch endowed with royal qualities reigns supreme over the land surrounded by the ocean.

For whom does the actor do this? Did any one ask them how the king rules the country? The spectators when they see Vasantaka on the stage are anxious to know the development of the story—whether Vasantaka was successful in his mission, what are the plans of Yaugandharayana to secure the release of Vatsaraja from the prison, etc.

They do not entertain any interest in the profound principles of state policy.

A. *The elaboration arises in course of explaining this passage:*

The king who enhances the joy of his subjects collecting one-sixth of their produce is well-known as avalagna.⁸

To convey the full significance of the term 'avalagna' the actor has to explain all these things.

The performance, then enjoins the actor's interpretative skill. Well. In the verse 'Śikhini śalabho' the actor will be forced to present repeatedly all the synonyms of fire to communicate the meaning of Śikhini.

B. *This is needed only for the vocal representations.*

The actor will then have to interpret every word giving all its details—'Ka' is repeated, 'e' is short etc. Derivation also is part of the interpretation.

Keep out such deceptive mockeries. The spectators know the words and their meanings. The actor is required to imitate the situations. It is sufficient for him to say that *avalagna* means the king.

C. *The word does not simply mean the king; but an overlord; one is elevated to that position thanks to his extra-ordinary qualities. They can be revealed only if the*

principles governing true kingship is discussed. Thus the overall context necessitates, by the power of tātparya, the description of polity.

No. *Tātparya* does not operate in the realm of *anuvādyā*, its function is confined to the *vidheya*. In every sentence *anuvādyā* is made the subject of an assertion. *Vidheya*, on the other hand, affirms or denies something of the subject. The former is supposed to be known already. Its repetition is to mark its connection with the *vidheya*. In the present context the 'eka' (King) is *anuvādyā*. The meaning brought out, i.e. the absence of the attributes denying supremacy, is *vidheya*.

The principle accepted by all is that in a sentence *tātparya* is non-operative in respect of the meaning conveyed by *anuvādyā*. Hence these details which are beyond the realm of *vidheya* are not embraced by the power of *tātparya*. Exhortation of kingship attempted here subordinates itself to the principal idea; hence cannot claim primacy lest the *vidhianuvāda* relation loses its authority.

6. UNNECESSARY FOR UDAYANA

The proclamation of polity pertains to whom—Udayana, Mahasena or Kings in general?

Not to the former. It is as unproductive as the ablution of an elephant. What is immediately described is that such a great king, the very embodiment of all good qualities, was captivated by another.

Mahasena also is not benefited by this since the audience takes no interest in him.

A. *As in the one who had bathed,¹⁰ this refers to the past life. His previous greatness, if reminded, will aggravate the pity of the present condition.*

Then it should be the other way round. The description of the greatness of a defeated king enhances only the greatness of the conqueror.

After describing the lineage, prowess and scholarship, etc. of even the enemy depiction of the excellences of the hero by his victory over such an enemy is in our opinion also pleasing.¹¹

7. IMPROPER TO MAHASENA

The description cannot be in respect of Mahasena. Extolling the valour of the enemy, which in no way contributes to the greatness of the hero, lacks propriety.

A. *The enemy is to be defeated by the hero. Hence the valour of the enemy ultimately reflects on his greatness.*

No. Udayana and Mahasena are not enemies. Being his father-in-law Udayana has equal respect for him.

B. *Prior to the marital relation they were enemies. Mahasena's imprisonment of Udayana and the latter's eloping with his daughter betray no friendship.*

No. They were not inimical. Time brought changes. Any how, it does not adversely affect the present position.

8. IRRELEVANT TO KINGS IN GENERAL

The third presumption also has no basis. Kings in general are not the target. It is out of context and hence irrelevant.

If relevance is sought on such flimsy grounds anything can be said to be relevant anywhere. Senseless mass of words like 'daśa dāḍima' will claim respect.

Incoherent talk, condemned as corrupt by the learned, cannot be accepted for the simple reason that it comes from the mouth of an actor.

9. CONDEMNATION OF PHYSICIANS

In course of reiterating the words of Rumanvan, Vasantaka condemns the physicians—Yama is cruel, he snatches the life of the people;

physician is still more cruel, he steals both the life and wealth of the patient.

This is the context, Vasantaka expresses happiness on the arrival of his friend. To explain the situation he recites a verse in vernacular *dāhe taṇṇīr* etc. A thing is most welcome when one is urgently in need of it. Water is delicious when one is thirsty. Here, deviating from the context he adds that doctors at times prohibit drinking of water. Then he goes on contemptuously criticising the physicians.

This is fetched and quite unwarranted to the context.

A. *The function of Tātparya justifies such extensions. One cannot restrict the operation of it to a particular area. Tātparya unlike denotation can comprehend any meaning in its fold.*¹²

Tell us what is *Tatparya* here, how does it operate and what is its limit.

Such discussions with the actors will yield anything good. Words and meaning, they keep close in their hands.

By adopting this method of extension one can connect anything to everything. The mud in the hands of the potter can be described as embedded with the knowledge of the absolute:

The next line of the verse—'koṭiya virahe' etc. describes one's ecstasy at the union with the beloved. There are great sages who advocate detachment. They condemn the sensuous passions and extol the tranquility of mind. Why do the actors not turn their guns, as they have done to the doctor, against them?

As opposed to the doctor, the actor can shower his praises on the magician who declares to accomplish all the desires by the power of his magic spell.

It things are thus permitted to be stretched out it will end no-where.

O Actor: You are actually an ape jumping from one branch to another. Even in *Mantrāṅkam* you retain your role (of Hanuman) in *Aṅgulīyāṅkam*.

By elaborating incidents unconnected to the theme, the actor actually throws the axe at the root of the tender creeper the plot.

Elongation even of a constituent offends our sensibility; not to say of those things alien.

10. NON-ENTRY OF RUMANVĀN

After the entry into the fire-house the play is performed without presenting Rumanvan on the stage. What is the reason for this?

The playwright has not described his exit prior to the deliberations, but only after that. It cannot be argued that Rumanvan did not come to the place. The instruction is explicit: 'All the three enter the fire house'. Nor is he reluctant to participate in the discussions; his views are seen expressed. Neither Yaugandharayana nor Vasantaka can be charged with being disinterested in him, for Yaugandharayana is described as encouraging Rumanvan by his advice to keep up the stability of his mind.

A. *The development of the plot and delineation of rasa in the scenes succeeding the fire house deliberations depend entirely on Yaugandharayana and Vasantaka, not on Rumanvan. Hence his presence is not of any use. Moreover his views are presented by Vasantaka in Malayalam.*

No. There is no authority to assert that the presence of Rumanvan is not necessary after the entry into the fire house as it was prior to it. If it were of no use the playwright himself would have, as is seen everywhere else, avoided him, directing his exit. Every character has his role till his exit.

11. ELLBORATION IN MALAYALAM

The part of Rumanvan is narrated in Malayalam by Vasantaka. Does it relate to the part already presented, or not presented or both. If to the part not enacted, why call for the services of the actor; narration alone will do. If on the other hand it relates to the part already presented the narration will be a useless repetition.

A. *It has other purpose. The narration in the familiar tongue brings the story close to their hearts.*

The narration has to be accommodated somewhere in the piece. Does it subordinate itself to the acting or to the music or to the instruments? It should enhance the utility of any of the limbs; it has no identity of its own, independent of others.

The audience has fully appreciated the story presented with the accompaniment of the fourfold modes of acting. Then it is retold to convey the contents! The actor is ridiculing the sensibility of the learned audience. The meaning of what he says ends in this: "O learned spectator, you do not seem to have understood what we have presented so far on the stage. Hence I will enlighten you by narrating it in the popular tongue."

Here is another mischief. While narrating the events in Malayalam the character at times produces an accented sound in tune with the sentiment. What does it mean? The actor though speaks Malayalam does not cease to be an imitator. Has he turned out to be a singer? Then it is good for him to put on the attire of a musician and also keep up the rhythm. Melody is not needed for the narration of a story.

In short the attempt to narrate the part of Rumanvan in vernacular does not enhance the utility of the performance. It stands as a monument for the unrestrained aberration of the actors. Such self-willed wantonness is evident in several other instances.

NOTES

1. DR -II. 64
2. *Saraswatikanthabharana* of Bhoja -II.16
3. DR-II. 63
4. NS XVII-47

5. Reference is to the jesters of the following plays-
 Vasantaka-PY Parāśarya -TS
 Kaṇḍīya -SD Śāṇḍilya -BA
6. Manusmṛti-III. 213 Translated by G.C. Haughton
7. NS - I. 115
8. The opening passage in Mantrāṅkam—'Ah! ekamodakaparitosito na tāvat avalagno mām anusarati'. The word *avalagna* here is explained in the sense of a king. In order to substantiate, this stanza is quoted from some traditional sources known only to the actors.
9. SD -I. 9
10. PY III.4
11. Kavyadarsa of Dandin -I. 22
12. DR IV 37- Avaloka Comm.
 PR -*Prathinjāyugandharāyaṇa* of Bhasa
 SD -*Subhadrādhanañjayam*
 TS- *Tapatisamvaraṇam*
 BA - *Bhagavadajjukam*

VI

NON-PRESENTATION OF DRAMATIC CHARACTERS

1. RECITATION BY THE SINGER

The girl seated behind intervenes, of and on, to recite the verses of the actor. If resorted to, to give a musical effect the verse should follow a rhythmic pattern like the one at the beginning introducing Vasantaka - Varāṇḍīma¹,.... otherwise it should accompany acting as in Mainākam nāgakanya²,.... with instruction to stop the beating of the drum.

A. The verse is intended for acting.

But the agents are different. Verse comes from the girl; gesticulations rest on the actor. Moreover permitting another to recite his own verse does not bring credit to an actor.

B. Take the verse as an authority cited to corroborate his actions, "What I have presented hitherto is not a figment of my imagination, it has been authenticated by great men".

Good, Please qualify the statement with an introductory phrase "as said by". Otherwise people will mistake it to be part of your action.

Moreover the recital does not correspond to the movements. Both should be performed by the same agent.

2. PROHIBITION TO THE ENTRY OF SITA

Female characters like³ Sita are not presented in person; at times they are not presented properly. The latter is evidenced in Aṅgulīyāṅkam wherein the singer puts on an upper garment and pronounces the words of Sita. The presentation is improper as it lacks complete make-up and suitable bodily movements.

Does the girl attain the attribute of Sita? If the answer is in the negative, the partial make-up and Prakṛt language are deceptive. Hanuman's words that Sita instructed him also loses their meaning. Thus it has to be admitted that the one who is seated behind reciting her words is Sita herself.

This is not the way to present a character. She should be dressed to suit her character.

Introductory verses and beating of the drum should herald her appearance. The initial entry should be behind the curtain. Why hesitate to provide all these?

A. *All the preparatory paraphernalia were omitted as sita does not actually enter the stage.*

Then why did you provide the upper garment and her words?

3. DIVINITY NOT VALID

A. *Sita inherits a divine origin. Hence it is not proper to present her on the stage like ordinary mortals.*

The celestial damsel Menaka is presented on the stage in person.

B. *She is not married to a hero. The one divinely born and also married to a hero cannot be presented on the stage.*

What about Subhadra? She is married to Arjuna. If mortal origin forbids the entry the pratihāri and others will have no place in a drama.

C. *The two qualities combined—mortal origin and marital status cause the entry of a character. Example—Malayavati in Nāgānanda.*

The cause and effect here cannot escape the flaw of reciprocal dependence. The same is again applicable when the non-entry of Sita and Draupadi is determined on the basis of divine origin.

D. *The two instances are not similar; Subhadra is actually presented on the stage; Sita is not.*

Yes. We too were asking the same question. Why Sita is not presented on the stage?

E. *The actors follow the conventions handed over to them.*

What is that convention? That female characters need not be presented; or Sita need not be presented? Not the former; it is contradicted by the presence of Subhadra. In the latter case the reasons adduced are feeble. Clinging to convention is sheer deception.

F. *Sita's presence owing to her supernatural powers terrifies the audience.*

How then do you imitate Goddess Kātyāyāni in Devīmāhātmya?

G. *Sita is not brought to the stage as we do not know the kind of costume she wears.*

Is it that you do not know the dress prescribed, or that there is no prescription at all? In the latter case why the dress for Sita is not prescribed? Menaka has her dress designed. It is beyond our power of comprehension that the daughter of Janaka is unfit to be presented on the stage.

There is none who cannot be imitated. There are no human beings, celestials, or mixed who cannot be imitated by dress, tone and action.

If on the other hand, you are not aware of the dress designed for her, it only reveals your ignorance.

The dress and ornaments suited to the occasion have to be assumed in accordance with the region and category of the characters.⁴

There need be no separate effort to know the make-up for Sita. Royal women all alike

wear the same dress. The dress while she stayed in the forest is also not difficult to find out. Matted hair and bark garments are provided for Rama and Lakshmana. Then attire to be worn during separation can be assigned on the analogy of Kurangī or other characters of similar nature.

H. Being divinely born Sita's dress is beyond our comprehension.

How did you comprehend that she speaks Prākṛt. The girl repeats 'tato tato'.

I. It is on the analogy of characters like Subhadra.

Then provide the dress also on the same analogy.

The dress we do not know as Sita is self-born;

But the language we know. This is half-murder.

The actors treat Sita as a mortal and give her the tongue, Prākṛt. To deny the costume they hold her to be of celestial origin—see the foolishness.

4. WOMEN AND HEROIC SENTIMENT

A. Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi depicts the sentiment of heroism. The principal character in such plays need not be accompanied with their consorts. It is in sṛṅgāra the female characters contribute to the development of rasa.

How do you justify the presence of Malayavati in *Nāgānanda*. The sentiment there is *vīra* or *śānta*; not *sṛṅgāra* in any case.

B. Even in such pieces the hero will at times be in an erotic mood necessitating the presence of the heroine.

Women are needed in non-erotic situations also—while participating in religious ceremonies or in consultations. The absence in such situations can be justified only on valid grounds.

C. It will be practically impossible to present all the characters on the stage.

Yes. But those who are essentially needed for the furtherance of the plot cannot be avoided. Sita belongs to that category.

5. REASONS INVALID

The five verses of Pampāpañcaka⁵ are intended on Sita. Hanuman addresses her directly by the appellation 'devi.' These beautiful verses are rendered meaningless if they are presented in her absence; the story also becomes deformed. Hence the presence of Sita is essential on the stage for the fulfilment of the dramatic requirements.

A. Yes. The presence is essential. What can we do?

Present her on the stage.

B. Can all the characters useful to the development of the plot be brought to the stage?

Present those characters whose entry is not forbidden due to sufficient reasons. Sita addressed in person is not a reflected character. Hanuman perceives her before his eyes. Had she been a reflected character, Hanuman prior to his address would have indicated

her absence by gesture and proceeded fixing his eyes in the air. Or he would have employed the device of ākāśabhāṣita. He might also have omitted the portions that do not suit a character who is not present.

6. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ENTRY

There is a positive necessity too for the entry of Sita. The off repeated instructions—'Rama enters with Sita', 'then enters Sita' etc.—show that the dramatist very much insists on her presence.

A. *All that the dramatists insist cannot be observed.*

The great poets who are well conversant with the divisions of the plot have composed their work taking all the facts into consideration. It is blasphemous to allege flow on their compositions.

B. *Instructions of the poets do not alone form the basis of performance. Instructions cover a wide range, the presentation is confined to specified areas. The science of medicine boasts on the efficacy of dog-meat prepared on medical advice; does it mean that all would eat flesh.*

The analogy is not proper. In the case of flesh-eating there are cannons that prohibit it. It says—

the meat of only five—clawed animals can be consumed—Hare, iguana, turtle, fish and deer⁶.

Dog flesh is thus forbidden.

A word may possess different connotations. The contextual, being most relevant, denies the emergence of other meanings through process of exclusion and convey the sense intended by the speaker. The entry of Sita is declared essential by the dramatist. No instruction elsewhere forbids it. Hence it cannot be excluded. Sita has to be presented on the stage.

All that are described in a play are meant for presentation. The words may differ - *parikramya* for *gatvā*. The meaning remains the same.

King Kulasekhara in his *Subhadrādhānanjaya* has desired the presence of Draupadi on the stage. By confining her to the background the actor has not only betrayed his arrogance to the poet, but also to the orders of the king.

The direction regarding the entry in Nāṭya is an order. It has to be obeyed. The same is true regarding the entry of Sthāpaka.

7. CHARACTERS SHOULD BE PRESENTED

Either you respect the words of the author and present Sita on the stage, or reject the poet in toto and keep away Subhadra too. The present posture of half-an aged woman is incompatible.

A. *The actors inherit an ancient tradition. Their practices are governed by the injunctions conveyed in it. It is not proper for any one to cast doubts on it.*

The drama also springs from a tradition. That tradition requires the presence of Sita on

the stage. The dramatist has explicitly stated this—'tatah pravisati Sitā'. The actor should respect that tradition too which, no doubt, is anterior to his own tradition.

B. Ours is a system that blindly follows conventions.
This is what we object to the blindness.

NOTES

1. This is one of the five verses, called *ālāmasloka* in Kūṭiyāṭṭam, sung by the Nangiār introducing Vasantaka in Mantrāṅkam. (III Act of PY)
2. AC VI-1
3. The female characters referred to in this context are -
Sita - AC
Draupadi SD
Subhadra
Menaka - TS
Malayavati - *Nāgānanda*
Kurangī - *Avimāra* ascribed to Bhasa.
4. NS XXI - 27
5. Five stanzas describing the pangs of separation of Rama used by the actors in Kūṭiyāṭṭam performance of Angulīyāṅkam.
6. *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*—Nag Publishers 1985 - P.59.

VII - CONCLUSION

1. DEBATE IS NECESSARY

A. The Nāṭya, cherished by gods and respected by the learned does not deserve such stupid dissent.

Here is the answer:

The actors are free to evolve their own techniques to present the plot and action. The Gods are pleased only when they concentrate on the emotion.

The faculty of intelligence, though of varied breed, finds solace only in the right path. It does not deviate from the way shown by the wise.

The one who has doubt only on the time of consumption-day or night of elephant meat, draws contempt from all.

Dissenting notes are accepted in the field of Nāṭya; the actors themselves maintain different views on several points.

To cite a few—

1. Rama reaches the sea-shore determined to annihilate Ravana. He is presented as one tormented by separation from his beloved¹

My agony does not exist because my beloved is away; Nor is it because she was stolen. I grieve that the time is passing away.

Others object to this saying that it will diminish his heroic stature.

2. In Asokavanikāṅkam Ravana condemns the moon as its rays inflame his carnal desires².

O snow-rayed moon, if your rays shower fire upon me, under the sway of passion, it is not due to your force nor to the strength of the wretched god of Love. It is, oh! master of the night, the power of Sita.

Some actors enact this mood in the presence of Citrayodhi, others prefer it prior to his entry.

3. *Angulīyāṅkam*, according to some, ends with the burning of Hanuman's tail; others reject it as unnecessary.

4. In *Mañtrāṅkam* Vasantaka enters in a contemplative mood, others present him with loud laughter, yet others with begging hands.

5. The make-up of Hanuman is with a neck-ornament. Others disagree. Some prefer it on the right, others on the left.

B. We do agree that the actors have differences of opinion among themselves. They follow different traditions traced to the remote past.

Let there be some new differences too. There is no distinction between old and new, for a dissent.

C. The new ones do not bear the stamp of our recognition.

The views, based on the basic tenets, all have to be heard.

The inevitable conclusion is that all the aforesaid actions of the actors are against the dramatic principles. The actors have no argument, that does not provoke laughter, to defend their stand. The helpless actor, when confronted with genuine questions seek refuge on these words 'the basis we know not', 'the tradition is like that' etc'.

This folk does not know anything about *nāṭyā* what it is, where it comes from, what does it depend on..... They repeat, without understanding the meaning, what was tutored. Better regard we will bestow on the parrots.

This being the situation there is reason, owing to our good luck, for a sigh of relief—they have not tampered plays like *Ābhijnānasakuntala*! The fate of *Nāgānanda*, lamentable indeed! They do something that much alone remains.

2. IN PRAISE OF NĀṬYA

A. Why are you so much averse to Nāṭya? Why do you condemn it?

The *nāṭya* we do not condemn. The object of our ridicule is the unfounded foul practices of the actors. Who on earth with a sane mind can think ill of the grand toy of the lord of three worlds? It will be as blasphemous as to discard the scriptures; For *nāṭya* owes its life to the Vedas—

O sages, the omniscient Brahma created the *nāṭyaveda* relating it to all the vedas and its auxiliaries. He took words from ṛk, music from sāma, action from Yajur and rasa from Atharvan³.

He considered it the best means for instruction.

Natya will be a source of entertainment for all as it combines in itself all the noble principles endowed in *Śruti*, *Smṛti* and tradition⁴.

B. If you stick to your line, why did you stop with this? You can invent many more questions. You can ask for example—

i. How do characters like Hanuman attain identity with the singer sitting aside.

ii. Why is the face made up this way?

iii. Why the change of time is ignored?

iv. Why the costumes are so designed?

We have no doubt about these points. Is there any rule that if one raises a doubt on a particular point, he should continue to do so on some other things.

There are time-honoured notions regarding time etc., in nāṭya. These concepts are the pre-requisites for every discussion. The non-recognition of them causes the very extinction of nāṭya.

Bharata instructs not to try to imitate the non-twinkling of eyes of Gods because it is hard to attain⁵. One does not lead us to the location where the incidents actually took place. The three types of theatres are designed to overcome the place-factor. The background music is an essential ingredient, hence its position need not be a matter of controversy. The dress also is not the one pertaining to the dvāpara age when the characters actually lived.

The questions and their answers should be based on two principles—the logic behind it and the authority for it.

Our dissents relate to the story, they do not penetrate into the realm of scriptures or of tradition.

The profuse flow, even of emotions, the authorities prohibit fearing interruption to the emerging plot. What then of 'Kriyā' that lacks any lustre.

When the directions regarding the entry of characters are specific any violation needs to be challenged.

Realisation of rasa is eclipsed by the addition of unconnected incidents. Why then take pains to abuse the physicians.

None desires anything devoid of utility. What use is then to the shift to local tongue and the insults heaped on Brahmins.

The bits of thought, shared so far, all keep awake the reasoning ever conforming to the ideals of the wise.

The method of your presentation is not laudable. It contains several flaws. That which is not like it commands respect—Cūdāmaṇi drama for example. In it the dramatist has omitted the 'Kriyā' as he knew that it is not useful. That which lacks utility does not serve the purpose as the wearing of a shell-garland to ward off the effects of cold. Avoidance of untimely interruption causes no damage to nāṭya. Music is employed in time and stopped when unnecessary

Our only point is this—the sacred nāṭya, by the force of ill-fate, now stands defiled

The ambrosial moon and the sacred nāṭyā-both are sweet and great. A black spot mars the beauty of the former; unrestrained movements that of the latter.

3. ADVICE TO THE ACTORS.

A. What should we do then?

Listen. The performance should strictly adhere to the precepts of Bharata. Keep out the interruption to the story. Remove the things unconnected. Stop your elaboration. Close the eyes to the unwanted. Away with the sky-flower like intermixture. Reject the regional tongue. Discard the reluctance to present the characters. Let every thing be as it is.

Hanuman enters with the ring in his hand - this is the direction of the poet. Present Hanuman with suitable make—up. On entering the stage he looks around, sees Lanka. Then pronounce his words Samprati hi. Then continues the text with 'Mainakaṁ'. Don't

interfere with 'Kriya' or narration of the past. Similarly in all other occasions. Enact freely the meaning of the verse; should never leave the posture of Hanuman. Follow this method through out.

Enact the meaning of the text as freely and vividly as you can. Always keep the self of the assumed character. This is the essence of acting.

One follows the principles of nāṭya if things are presented in this way.

Here ends *Natāṅkuśa*.

NOTES

1. VR Yudha - V.5
2. AC V.6
3. NS I. 17, 18.
4. NS I. 120
5. NS XIII. 30.